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THE ART OF SEDUCTION OF GIACOMO CASANOVA AN ANALYSIS OF "THE STORY OF MY LIFE"

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ABSTRACT - *In "Histoire de ma vie" or what we know as "The Story of My Life", by Giacomo Casanova, it was Casanova who was known as a womanizer or a great seducer to women. It was him who in almost of his life travelled from country to country to make his adventures which were fully colored with controversial affairs with different women. The first time he got an affair was with his instructor's young sister, Bettina. "It was she who little by little kindled in my heart the first sparks of a feeling which later became my ruling passion"(36). From that on he made his way of connecting with different kinds of women until he felt that whatever gave pleasure to himself as the most important things in his life.*

keywords: womanizer, seduction, eternal love

1. BACKGROUND

"The chief business of my life has always been to indulge my senses; I never knew anything of greater importance. I felt myself born for the fair sex, I have ever loved it dearly, and I have been loved by it as often and as much as I could"(21)

From this evidence, up to now Casanova has certainly merited people's look. He has been stigmatized as a tricky womanizer who had only concerned on gaining satisfaction from short bed room- game with his victims. In that, women in the entire world will hate this kind of character. However, there are actually two interesting facts which contradicted what people have commonly expected. The first is in that time, almost the women who had affair with him gave a great respect to him. "No; it is you who have made me happy"(1254). Nowadays, he is known because of his legendary sexual appetite. However, in his age, every affair he had always became a mutual affection." Then you would have seen that I loved you too, and our affection would have been mutual"(1785). Another fact shows us that there was something that he looked for from those affairs. He highly appreciated women of high intelligence. There must be something he expected from their intelligence rather than only having sexual intercourse with them. Based on the two facts above, how did Casanova seduce every woman he had affair with? What was he actually looking for from those women's intelligence?

2. DISCUSSION

As to the first question, William Bolitho points out in *Twelve Against the Gods*, "the secret of Casanova's success with women "had nothing more esoteric in it than [offering] what every woman who respects herself must demand: all that he had, all that he was, with (to set off the lack of legality) the dazzling attraction of the lump sum over what is more regularly doled out in a lifetime of installments." The point here is that giving respect to a woman is the main requirement. Honoring woman by providing whatever she needs either material or moral will give its own feedback to the man. As to two lovers, each lover needs to be loved by his/her beloved. Knowing herself beloved by her lover will satisfy a woman. In that, she will give everything she has to the man she loves. Carlos Xuma says in his blog on "Casanova's four secrets of seduction" mainly discusses that Casanova had prepared everything would do before seducing woman. Even he focused on details more than other men would do. Lighting candles in the room, leaving poem on her bed, spreading flowers in their privacy space are among the details Casanova would have done. In the "movie of Casanova" acted by Heath Ladger in 2005, in a scene there was a very romantic plan by Casanova when he trusted a tailor to make a big flying balloon made from textile in order to woe his target in a carnaval festival.

"I passed the next two days quietly and agreeably without going out or seeing any visitors, but the society of Madame Dubois was all-sufficient for me. Early on Sunday morning the ambassador's people came to make the necessary preparations for the ball and supper. Lebel came to pay me his respects while I was at table. I made him sit down, while I thanked him for procuring me a housekeeper who was all perfection" (1140)

Being actually romantic and preparing everything really well are the greatest ways that Casanova counted on.

Masters says "In a pattern Casanova often repeated, he would discover an attractive woman in trouble with a brutish or jealous lover (Act I); he would ameliorate her difficulty (Act II); she would show her gratitude; he would seduce her; a short exciting affair would ensue (Act III); feeling a loss of ardor or boredom setting in, he would plead his unworthiness and arrange for her marriage or pairing with a worthy man, then exit the scene (Act IV)" (1969: p 61). Here it is obvious that Casanova knew well how to attract woman. He gained love from woman by generally saying "you are the only one I want". He conveyed his feeling from the deepest heart to women. He preferred love to lie. That is why every woman wooed by such a way would totally give up her heart to him. He also preferred to play a save game when he found boredom during the relationship. He would manage to make the woman remain happy while he actually abandoned her. Those were what Casanova did in practical.

While theoretically, there were some stereotypes that he must follow during his love adventures. Before talking about those particular stereotypes, there was another interesting fact in Casanova's age when women married for the social status reason. Flirtations, bedroom games, and short-term liaisons were common among nobles who married for social connections rather than love. For Casanova, it was an open field of sexual opportunities. Here, it is obviously evidence that women in that time were also allured to find their real love. They needed the love that could pervade their life, love with mutual gratification. In this case, Casanova met all the qualification as to become their perfect lover. This was because he had been following the following particular stereotypes based on different translation of "the story of my life"

1. **Don't beat around the bush.**

"The very next morning I sent the following note to La Valville: I would like, madame, to have an affair with you. You have awakened distressing desires in me, which I challenge you to satisfy."

2. **Appeal to her rational side.**

"She told me it was in my power to seduce her, but that if I loved her, I should spare her this shame. I made it clear to her that an intelligent girl could only be ashamed of giving herself to a man she did not love; but if she loved me, then love, assuming responsibility for everything, would justify her in everything."

3. **Agonize over her.**

"After giving her a faithful account of the state in which her charms had put me and the pains I had suffered for having resisted the inclination to give her clear signs of my affection, I told her that, as I could no longer endure the torment her presence caused my enamoured soul, I found myself with no choice but to ask her please not to appear before my eyes any more.... I described to her the frightful consequences that might bring us unhappiness if we were to act otherwise than in the manner her virtue and mine had forced me to propose to her.... We then spent a good hour in the most eloquent silence, broken only by Lucia's crying out from time to time: 'Ah! My God! Is it possible I am not dreaming?'"

4. **Be persistent, if you think she's the woman for you.**

"We sat down to eat; and in his speech, his attitude, the expression in his eyes, and his smiles, Bellino seemed like a different person.... Once in bed, I shuddered as I saw him draw near.... At last we took a rest. An intermission was in order. But we were not exhausted; our senses merely needed for our minds to calm down before they could fall back into place. Bellino was the first to break the silence, asking me if I thought she was a loving mistress. 'Mistress?' I said. 'So you admit you are a woman?'"

5. **Be patient.**

"She could see I was burning for her, and as she seemed pleased with my restraint, I asked her if she would mind if I called on her often.... Our intimacy began one evening after supper, when she was overcome by convulsions that lasted the entire night. I did not leave her bedside, and the following day I was justly rewarded for my twenty-six years of constancy."

6. **Praise her experience.**

"I finally realized she was afraid I would reproach her if I found she was not a virgin. Her anxiety amused me, and I was pleased to assure her that the virginity of girls seemed to me nothing more than an invention of boys, since nature had deprived most girls of even the signs of it. I ridiculed those who made it a question of honor. I could see that my wisdom pleased her, and she came into my arms full of confidence."

7. **Show your gratitude.**

"Each discovery I made raised my soul to love, which in turn fortified me in the demonstration of my gratitude. She was astonished to find herself receptive to so much pleasure, for I showed her many things she had considered fictions. I did things to her that she did not feel she could ask me to do and I taught her that the slightest constraint spoils the greatest pleasures."

8. **Give as good as you get.**

"Cultivating the pleasures of the senses was my principle concern throughout my life; none, indeed, was ever more important to me. Feeling as though I was born for the fair sex, I have always loved it and let it love me as much as I could."

Those steps above helped Casanova in seducing women. They felt Casanova could give what their husband could not. He was a perfect opportunist who came to the right situation with wonderful strategies. He did not treat his mistresses like what a man do when having sex with prostitutes. They are only looking for self-pleasure without being attentive to them. Casanova apparently paid a big attention to the mutual negation. He acted toward them with the love from the deepest heart. He would do everything patiently and in detail in order to gain their love. He would give great gratitude to them in that everyone of them would feel loved. It was not merely a matter of seduction, but it was further than that. He paid a big attention on necessary details and appreciated every woman he had affair with. This was how Casanova seduced women.

To answer the second research question, it was presumable that Casanova was inspired by the platonic love. Three stages of love were presumed as three pillars which would construct a perfect kind of love. Casanova obviously knew well those three stages.

"Throughout the summer, I carried on a course of Platonic love with my charming Angela at the house of her teacher of embroidery" (71)

Love of body, love of soul, and love of mind range in sequence as to from the lowest level of love till the highest. Pausanians says in Plato Symposium that there are two kinds of love as they are two of Aprodhites, common love and noble love. It seemed that Casanova was not feeling satisfied with the first one. He probably thought that there were more to seek rather than only physical gratification. The more valuable love is that the love of mind. That was

perhaps the reason why Casanova really saluted women with high intelligence. However, the love of mind would be more worthily valuable if he combined it with the lower level of love – love of body or love of beauty. According to Casanova's point of view, the most perfect love is that evoked from sensual pleasure. Casanova tried to combine those loves. He enjoyed the charming of his mistresses while he was also enjoying their intelligence which he perceived as the source of their sexual quality. He madly loved two women with intelligence – Pauline and Henriette.

"The analogy between my parting with Pauline and my parting with Henriette fifteen years before, was exceedingly striking; the two women were of very similar character, and both were equally beautiful, though their beauty was of a different kind. Thus I fell as madly in love with the second as with the first, both being equally intelligent" (1936)

In Giacomo Casanova movie launched in 2005 acted by Heath Ledger, it was clearly depicted that Fransesca, a woman whom Casanova felt in love with, was a kind of intelligent woman. She dared to act against the past Italian society common perspective on gender. She made her way to raise woman's right to have equal status with men by publishing her book and studying law. Casanova loved her very much and strove to gain her love with his elegant tricks. Dinitia Smith 1997 in her article says that "He likes intelligent women very much. Women are not just an object of desire, but people to talk to". There was something that Casanova tried to enjoy from those intelligent women. It was probably that he got pleasure from the warmth given by those women he seduced. Another possibility was probably because of the abandonment by his parents when he was only one year old,

"I was born nine months afterwards, on the 2nd of April, 1725.

The following April my mother left me under the care of her own mother, who had forgiven her as soon as she had heard that my father had promised never to compel her to appear on the stage"(25)

Casanova had lost his mother's love. He did not feel the warmth of his mother love. This problem probably triggered his bizarre way of life. Still in the same article Dinitia says "It could be argued that the rest of his life was a search for the maternal warmth that was abruptly taken from him when he was a baby". It was perhaps the reason why Casanova managed his way to get that warmth by seducing different women. There was psychological reason behind all his behave. Out of his sexual appetite, there was an insatiable hunger of love. The sexual contact was doubtless only a facility to gain the real satisfaction from women, feeling of warmth.

3. CONCLUSION

Based on some analyses which are depicted in above paragraphs, we come to conclude that Casanova was a legend of women's seduction. It was indicated by the fact that he was good enough in satisfying women's hunger for love. He would follow a standard pattern of him in doing his seduction. In that, practically, he succeeded in attracting different kinds of women. Theoretically, he was also determined. There were some principles that he was attentively aware of prior to his action. The continuity in using those principles would help him successfully. He also thought that women were not just as object of desire, but people to talk to. Women of high intelligence were very nice to talk to. The dearth of maternal warmth also probably animated his desire in seducing women. He thought he would find this warmth through those women. After all, Casanova's adventures in women were not merely for sex satisfaction, but it was further than that. He knew what he looked for.

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